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Lüpke, Friederike

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III) Ideology and Meaning in Creole Language Usages

Multiple choice:

Language use and cultural practice in rural Casamance between convergence and divergence¹

Friederike Lüpke

fl2@soas.ac.uk

SOAS, University of London

Abstract

The Casamance region of Southern Senegal is characterised by a deeply entrenched dualism that shapes linguistic and cultural expression. While most cultural practices and important parts of the linguistic repertoires of its inhabitants are shared throughout the region, these regional convergences have not led to the emergence of a shared lingua franca that could result in a new, creolised identity. Despite shared linguistic repertoires, distinct local identities are also upheld in this region through the maintenance of small, often village-based languages, resulting in high individual multilingualism and great linguistic diversity in the area. I explore the historical development of this cultural and linguistic ecology, tracing it back to the need for expressing flexible alliances through the situated creation and transcendence of boundaries in a Frontier society. I discuss the social mechanisms that nurture this type of multilingualism and investigate how its longstanding patterns are transformed

¹ The ideas presented here emerged during the interdisciplinary research project “Pots, plants and people – a documentation of Bainouk knowledge systems”, funded by the DoBeS programme of the VW Foundation from 2010 to 2013. My heartfelt thanks go to the colleagues and students working with me in this project – Amadou Kane Beye, Alexander Cobbinah, Cheikh Daouda Diatta and Moustapha Sall. The emerging hypotheses on multilingual language use and the ideologies fuelling it resulted in the ongoing Leverhulme Research Leadership Award Project “Crossroads – investigating the unexplored side of multilingualism” in Casamance. I gratefully acknowledge the support of both funders. I am deeply indebted to my students and colleagues Alain Christian Bassène, Alexander Cobbinah, Samantha Goodchild, Abbie Hantgan, Chelsea Krajcik, Rachel Watson and Miriam Weidl for the stimulating multi- and interdisciplinary research and inspiring exchange we are engaging in together. The inhabitants of the Crossroads villages and of Agnack have been very welcoming and actively involved in our research, and I would like to extend my gratitude to them. Through the intense collaboration in the research team and with our research participants, I have been able to develop the ideas presented here. *Ño farr!*

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through the interaction with identity-creating processes at the national level of Senegal and beyond.

Introduction: two seeming clashes

“Scholars studying western Africa are challenged by conundrums involving relationships between languages, social groupings, and cultures. People in western Africa define themselves principally according to kinship and occupational affiliations and only secondarily in linguistic terms. Indeed individuals and families change their languages and modify their social and cultural patterns in ways that are often perplexing to outsiders. Individuals may change their family names to assert their affiliation with elite families (captives once adopted slavemaster names), to express client relationships, apprenticeships, or religious affiliations, and for other reasons.”
(Brooks 1993: 27)

To an outside observer, apparent contradictions characterise linguistic and cultural interactions in Senegal's Lower Casamance. The first paradox pertains to the contrast between cultural homogeneity and linguistic heterogeneity: throughout the area, cultural practices are convergent to a large extent. Where they exhibit differences, these are not motivated by ethnic divisions but by local constellations orthogonal to them. Linguistically, the opposite holds, at least at first sight: Lower Casamance is a hotspot of linguistic diversity. It is home to 30+ languages² of essentially local distribution, with many languages having a village as their nominal home. At the same time, the identity discourses of inhabitants of the region follow ideologies that are, in essential or indexical fashion, based on foregrounding one ethnolinguistic identity, be it in absolute or contextualised manner, although they are spectacularly multilingual and master complex repertoires often containing three or more languages of local distribution (which often are linguistically closely related), two or more regional languages of wider communication and one or two national languages.

Another paradox characterising the co-existence of the many languages of Casamance is that their use and the ideologies surrounding them follow two different configurations of multilingualism. Crucially, the multilingual configuration in local languages does not follow

² Languages are to be understood as constructs that reflect historical, religious, political and social identity concerns and have no grounding in linguistic criteria.

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the polyglossic patterns of many Western settings, where languages are assigned specific domains that often go hand in hand with hierarchical relationships between them. Small-scale local multilingual settings follow different patterns based on intense social exchange, and none of the languages involved enjoys a higher status or is used in a broader range of domains than others. Since speakers take part in local and wider national configurations, the different language use patterns and language ideologies associated with both appear to result in incompatible concepts of multilingualism at first sight.

My motivation is to explain the reason why speakers within Casamance do not experience this paradox; rather I show that their dynamic and diverse practices are bound together by a deeply entrenched dualism which plays upon sameness and differences. This dualism is rooted in past and current socio-political strategies for maximising flexible alliances and present-day needs for positioning in a national ethnolinguistic marketplace. Small-scale multilingualism - multilingualism occurring in a confined area where it has become part of the social mechanisms creating an ecology - offers the tools to create versatile and multiple bonds through indexical use of different languages in different contexts. This type of multilingualism is characterised by a particular type of language ideologies, understood here, following Silverstein, as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use.” (Silverstein 1979: 193). Crucial for an investigation of the dual patterns of language use and language ideologies at work in Casamance and in a wider national context is the difference between nationalist language ideologies, based on essentialising notions of nation and ethnicity linked to particular languages and hostile to multilingualism, and indexical language ideologies that allow situational fore- and backgrounding of particular aspects of identity through linguistic practice or ideological stance (See Woolard & Schieffelin 1994 for a critical review of language ideologies in different fields of humanities, and Kroskrity 2007 for a more recent overview). The language ideologies fostering small-scale multilingualism allow nuanced emphasis of particular aspects of identity for different audiences and are at best partially matched by linguistic practice. The local and regional connections created through ethnolinguistic affinities were indispensable for survival in the precolonial past; in the present-day socio-political configuration of the Senegalese postcolonial nation state, they have been complemented and partly superseded by polyglossic or hierarchical, domain-specialised, multilingual patterns. These local patterns have been overlaid with more recent constellations of regional and national multilingualism that follow different motivations and

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are driving the emergence of new essentialist language ideologies not only for the larger, but also for the local languages. These more recent ideologies have to be understood as symbolic strategies motivated by a reconfiguration of the linguistic landscape at the regional and national level. That both levels co-exist rather than the polyglossic constellation taking precedence follows from the longstanding Frontier identities of inhabitants of Casamance enabling them to enact different aspects of identities in versatile fashion. Frontier societies, discussed in detail in §2 below, are based on small groups continuously breaking up and entering new formations. Versatile language use concomitant with ideologies that valorise it constitute a central part of the semiotic practices central to participate in these societies. Therefore, their role deserves a thorough investigation. It is impossible to reconstruct past language practices, since the available written sources only offer scarce information on language names. From a study of word lists and glossonyms³ collected by travellers to the area, it is possible to conclude that the spectrum of multilingualism on the Upper Guinea Coast 500 years ago was similar to the present-day situation (Hair 1967). Therefore, it makes sense to look at multilingual patterns of language use in present-day Casamance and at the language ideologies underlying them and connect them to those historical accounts of social and political structures for which we have evidence. Such a procedure can reveal the past motivations for creating the language use pattern that is still attested today while at the same time revealing domains of social organizations that have changed in the post-colonial environment of the Senegalese nation state and their already tangible impact on language use and language ideologies.

Casamance is host to a high number of named languages. Most of them belong to the Atlantic grouping of languages, whose status as genetic or areal, and whose internal division, is currently being debated (Lüpke forthcoming 2016a). To this grouping belong the languages of the Jóola and Bainounk clusters which will feature prominently in this paper, both of them with clear genetic relationships within the clusters. The internal diversity of the Jóola language cluster is variegated, with some varieties very closely related and mutually intelligible. Bainounk languages are not mutually intelligible. Other Atlantic languages and language clusters present in Casamance languages are Balant, Manjak and Mankanya. Pular and Wolof, two Atlantic languages with high numbers of speakers, do not have ideological

³ Ethnoym is a term commonly used to designate a term used to name an ethnic group. In analogy, glossonym denotes the name given to a language by its speakers or by outsiders. Ethnonyms and glossonyms sometimes coincide, but often do not (so, for instance, Jóola and Bainounk are widely used ethnonyms but cannot function as glossonyms because the members of these groups speak different, albeit related, languages).

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home bases⁴ in Casamance, although they are widely represented. Typologically very different and belonging to the Mande family is Mandinka, a language with a large speaker base that also has an important role as language of Islam in Casamance. Finally, a Portuguese-based Creole is spoken throughout Casamance and adjoining Guinea Bissau and often takes the role of *lingua franca*, besides being the ethnic language of the area's Creole population. Although it is possible to assign ideological home bases to languages, it is impossible to generalise the dynamic multilingual repertoires of people. Goodchild (in prep.) provides the salient example of a married couple in the village of Agnack Grand, to the east of Ziguinchor, who each list 9 languages as their individual repertoire, yet only share two languages between them. This example is illustrative of dynamic practices throughout Casamance and, to a lesser extent, the north of the country, where linguistic practice is shaped by personal trajectories throughout an individual's life time, creating unique linguistic biographies. A historical and social explanation for the multilingual habitus enabling this versatility constitutes the core of this paper.

In the following, I describe the kaleidoscope of small-scale multilingualism in Lower Casamance in the wider context of similar settings in precolonial societies against a backdrop of cultural convergence in §2. §3 is devoted to the analysis of the layers of polyglossic multilingualism added through colonial and postcolonial linguistic hegemonies and to the interaction between both small scale and larger patterns. §4 brings together the different dualisms characterising the complex dynamics of linguistic practices and ideologies surrounding them.

The historical development of small-scale multilingualism in Lower Casamance

“The African frontier we focus on consists of politically open areas nestling between organized societies but “internal” to the larger regions in which they are found – what might be called an “internal” or “interstitial frontier”. (Kopytoff 1987: 9)

Precolonial identity construction and exchanges at the African Frontier

⁴ All languages of Senegal have translocal speaker bases. When I offer geographical locations for languages this means the place they are identified with according to their ideological ‘home base’ as patrimonial languages, see §2.

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The entire region of Lower Casamance was characterised by the absence of larger states institutions in pre-colonial times. Situated within the boundaries of the sunken coast line of the Upper Guinea Coast, Lower Casamance is roughly delimited by the rivers Gambia in the north and Cacheu in the south, and traversed by the river Casamance whose countless estuaries criss-cross the area and create marsh lands, islands and peninsulas surrounded by mangroves. The topographic situation of Lower Casamance in the tropical savannah climate zone, with rainfalls supporting diverse agricultural activities allowing autonomous subsistence of fairly small groups, has contributed to shaping the settlement pattern of the area as one where small groups without formalized larger state structures have existed for the past two millennia (Brooks 1993). The expansion of the empires to the north and east into this zone was precluded through its situation in a climatic zone with more than 1,000mm of annual rainfall (since the 12th century coinciding with the river Gambia). This geographical condition entails the presence of tsetse flies, which prevents its penetration by horse warriors and hence renders it inaccessible to conquering armies (Brooks 1993: 22ff.) and thus marks “one of western Africa’s ecological, social and cultural frontiers” (1993: 22).

The area south of the river Gambia was situated beyond the reaches of the “tidal frontier” (Kopytoff 1987) of the expanding state formations to the north and, further inland, to the east. Its situation beyond the last ripples of the Mande empires also made it a prototypical instance of the second incarnation of the internal African Frontier (Kopytoff 1987); the local frontier, a boundary and a region at the same time. In the area below the river Gambia, small, family-based, groups continuously broke off to reconstitute and relocate in order to avoid conflict and find subsistence. Potential conflict and lack of sufficient cultivable grounds could lead at least some sons of one father to migrate and found new villages, which would have their nominal identity founded on an identity based on lineage or clan membership according to patrilineal descent⁵. Identity and political structure were, at least historically, much more grounded in lineage than on concepts of ethnicity, which were created in the more recent past. In this paper, I focus on two ethnicities: Baïnounk and Jóola. In the public imagination, these two groups make up the inhabitants of Casamance, with the Baïnounk taking the place of the autochthones and the Jóola that of the later immigrants that ended their reign. Baïnounk is an

⁵ It is somewhat unexpected to find a patrilineal society in Casamance, as many groups in this area have been described as matrilineal. However, Alexander Cobbinah’s and my fieldwork findings revealing the patrilineal and virilocal characteristics underlying descentance and settlement patterns in two Baïnounk societies are confirmed by Bühnen (1994) who describes the Baïnounk as patrilineal based on the oral histories he collected in the entire language area, although he notes some matrilineal traits regarding inheritance rights.

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older cover term with unclear epistemological value (see Cobbinah 2010, 2013, Lüpke 2010 a and b, Lüpke in press 2016a) without equivalence in any Bainounk language⁶. Jóola is a recent label emerging from the late 18th century onwards used by colonial administrators to regroup culturally and linguistically close peoples that previously had no overarching shared identity (Baum 1999, Van der Klie & de Jong 1995, Mark 1985, Thomas 1958-1959).

A dichotomy between first-comers and late-comers

The Frontier as a region is characterised by the fictional vacuum it presents to its first settlers, who turn themselves into the autochthones, even though they often really are not. First-comers are the ones that lay claims to the land and, through their descendants and linguistic identity, determine its patrimonial language. A dichotomy between first-comers and late-comers (Kopytoff 1987), or landlords and strangers (Brooks 1993), underpins the association of settlements with groups and their languages still today. The contrast is reflected in a productive indigenous strategy of naming languages. I exemplify this with the glossonym *Kujóolay Jire* or *Jóola Kujireray*. The first part of the name (*Kujóolay* or *Jóola*) is changeable and identifies them as belonging to one intermediate level of ethnolinguistic organisation, for instance as *Jóola*, *Bainounk*, *Balant* or *Manjak*. In many instances, these intermediate levels ultimately originate in classifications of outsiders that have since then been appropriated in past and ongoing processes of ethnogenesis. The second part of the name is often derived from a place name and characterises the language as being the language of a particular location. Only the first part identifies this language as an ethnic one, for instance as being *Jóola*, *Bainounk*, *Balant*, etc. *Kujóolay Kujireray* for instance reads as ‘the Jóola language of Jire’, Jire being the indigenous toponym of the village⁷ of Brin (Watson 2014); *ku-/gu-* is the noun class prefix used for languages in both *Jóola* and *Bainounk* languages. The same

⁶ Bühnen (1994), without making any claims on the exact meaning of the term, states that it is used in the oral histories of the Bainounk elders he interviews and therefore must date back quite a long time. It is notable, though, that his interviews were conducted in Mandinka (the probable donor language of this term), and therefore does not reflect emic perspectives – as Cobbinah (2013) and Lüpke (in press 2016a) have discussed in detail, there is no term in any known Bainounk language referring to the group as a whole.

⁷ Attempts have been made to use meaning or morphological characteristic of toponyms themselves to conclude on the language used by their founders, as in Bühnen (1992, 1994). Given the dangerous status of folk etymologies in oral history, these attempts should be read with caution. Morphological evidence is similarly inconclusive. Thus, Bühnen ascribes toponyms beginning in *ka(n)-*, as in *Kafountine* or *Kabrousse*, a Jóola origin, obviously unaware of the fact that *ka(n)-* is a productive locative prefix in Bainounk languages (Cobbinah 2013, Lüpke forthcoming b.). Given that there are many homophonous noun class markers in Jóola and Bainounk, this evidence is of limited value.

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language can also be characterised as the Baïnounk language of Brin, or even the Baïnounk-Jóola language of Brin (Rachel Watson, p.c.), attesting at the same time to the layered and versatile nature of ethnic classifications and to the absence of an ethnic connotation from the second part of the name. In fact, the referential entity to which ‘the language of X’ refers is the one currently claimed as the patrimonial language, something I characterise as patrimonial deixis. Patrimonial deixis refers to that language that is currently seen as the first-comer language of the location, a status that depends on changing political constellations. In current practice either part of the language name can be omitted. Since the second part of the name (which in connotation with the ethnic first part makes ethnic claims on autochthony) is primarily of local significance, it is generally omitted for outsiders. Therefore, even the extent of nominal linguistic diversity in Lower Casamance is not revealed to everyone – even less than the full scope of multilingual practice.

Hamlets, villages, or entire areas are nominally associated by their inhabitants with one language or language cluster, their patrimonial language. The association to a patrimonial lineage does not reflect actual language use but reveals the nominal or identity language of the founding clan or claims of particular groups to autochthony or land ownership. To those to whom this name is revealed, following the patrimonial model described by Kopytoff (1987), the name contains a strong claim of first-comer status. Inhabitation of an area by new-comers is sometimes reflected in the names of wards that specify the ethnic identity of the newcomers that settled in them. To illustrate with an example, a ward of the nominally Baïnounk Gubëeher-speaking village Djibonker is called Djibonker Manjak (Alexander Cobbinah, p.c.) because it was settled by people of the Manjak ethnicity. In these cases, the name of the older settlement (e.g. Djibonker) is unmarked, whereas the name of the newer settlement has a modifier detailing the ethnic identity of its inhabitants. Recent settlements are often equipollently marked – the recently founded village Borofaye has two quarters, the ward Borofaye Baïnounk, inhabited by settlers from the Baïnounk Guñaamolo area, and the ward Borofaye Jóola, regrouping inhabitants that are ethnically Jóola. The toponyms each mark the nominal affiliation, thus signifying from the outset that for none of them a claim of autochthony is made.

Languages as discrete entities are thus not exclusively construed by outsiders and superimposed on fluid practice, as happened throughout the continent in the wake of colonization (see Blommaert 2008, Lüpke & Storch 2013). Named languages of locations reflect indigenous ontologies, not just Western categorizations; yet the notions around which

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they are construed and the contexts in which they are revealed and used are radically different from Eurocentric ideas of languagehood and roles of languages. This difference will become apparent through the close inspection of the nature of ties between identities, language ideologies and language use in what follows.

Frontier processes in the era of the transatlantic slave trade

The small, decentralized groups of Casamance were vulnerable due to the location of the region in the geographic sphere of the slave trade on the Atlantic coast (Baum 1999, Hawthorne, 2003, Rodney 1969). Rather than being passive reservoirs of slaves for the transatlantic trade, Casamance groups adopted active strategies for survival. In order to be able to defend their communities, groups participated in the slave raids themselves in order to capture slaves, either to be sold to traders or to be integrated into the group in order to strengthen the group's number and labour force (Baum 1999, Hawthorne 2003). Kidnapping for ransom was rife in the entire area (Baum 1999, Bühnen 1994, Hawthorne 2003); vulnerable travellers were taken and held for ransom. Their families would send out search parties and negotiate the conditions of their return. If they were not found in time, the kidnapped were sold to slave traders.⁸ However, not only strangers and travellers were captured and sold. At times it was necessary to sell group members. Baum describes (Jóola) Esulau oral histories remembering how children were captured and hidden by neighbours before being sold, and special shrines being created to protect those practicing this forbidden practice from the punishment of the community or the spirits. A widespread othering technique active within clan- or lineage-based communities lay in accusing a group member of witchcraft. Even if the trading group members would normally be sanctioned, witches were sometimes exempt from this protection and if they were not killed⁹ they and their families could be sold among the Bainounk (Bühnen 1994) and Brames (Hawthorne 2003).

⁸ Predating the development of the slave trade is the kidnapping of people for ransom to be paid in cattle (Baum 1999, Hawthorne 2003).

⁹ People were killed either for being witches or through a diagnostic poison won from the bark of the Tali tree that allegedly killed witches while it made vomit those innocent of witchcraft. This poison test was widespread in the entire area (Baum 1999, Hawthorne 2003, Thomas 1958-1959).

While Casamance Frontier groups had to participate in the slave trade for their survival, they also attempted defence alliances against it. Systematic exchanges, both of a symbolic and a practical nature, at all levels of social organisation served to fulfil this goal. Although their social purpose has changed since the abolishment of the slave trade, many of these exchanges are still in place, while others, such as the elaborate *bukut* initiation rites, have been created since then in order to strengthen regional identities in cultural resistance to French colonization (de Jong 2002) and remain in practice through continuous adaptation to changing social circumstances (Cobbinah in prep.). Bonds and support networks between different clans and families are made possible by, and thus necessitate being perceived as different. Symbolic ties include marriage bonds between communities, the evoking of shared religion, shared shrines, communicating ponds, paired holy sites etc. (see Baum 1999, Hawthorne 2003, Linares 1992). Through the creation of bonds and networks, the difference motivating the people is in reality transcended as they result in cohabitation or close exchange. Rhetorically and in the collective imagination of the communities, the difference is often upheld for centuries. Baum's (1999) reporting of 'foreigner villages' among the (Jóola) Esulalu testifies to this ideological distinction. Historical sources allow some of the villages to be dated back to the 18th century, the time of the emergence of the first ethnic identities. Like Esulalu townships, they were and are inhabited by a heterogeneous mix of inhabitants, and participated in manifold exchanges; yet they were still categorized as different at the time of Baum's research.

A major historical motivation for the maintenance of manifold ties was the protection these ties offered from being sold into slavery or being kidnapped. At the same time, flexible nature of ties allowed groups to make use of construed differences through religion, language, etc. The flexible nature of the ties allowed the necessary distance to be able to capture and sell others into slavery or, mainly in the case of women and children, integrate them into their community. Affinities could be selectively activated, not only through choosing a shared language, but also through other symbolic means, such as worshipping the same shrine, forging marriage communities, symbolising alliances through communicating ponds or holy trees at different sites corresponding with each other, etc.. Crucially, however, identities could not be completely transcended, partly because of the ongoing Frontier processes preventing such a complete merger, but surely in large part because they had become part of the semiotic repertoire needed to navigate the frontiers. The dualism between similarity and difference

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was, and remains, a driving force for maintaining multiple identities and complex multilingual repertoires.

Frontier processes as nurturing multilingualism

As I have shown, difference and othering were necessary in order to rationalise the participation in slave raids, kidnapping, and warfare targeting close neighbours and group members. At the same time, through the practice of regular exchanges, difference was also needed in order to create the affinities (resulting in sameness) that were based on symbolic ties between perceived different entities and that resulted in being protected from attacks.¹⁰ The necessity of small differences does not only entail that identities are multiple and contextually index different aspects in order to invoke particular bonds or negate them. This dialectic principle also entails that a multitude of semiotic practices are used indexically (Silverstein 1976), with dress code, names, languages and religious affiliations¹¹ among the signifiers of identity (see Ménard this volume for similar observations in the Sherbro/Kriol continuum of the Freetown peninsula of Sierra Leone). Just like linguistic identity, the identities expressed through these attributes are not monolithic in Casamance and elsewhere. Individuals bear multiple names, some of which express family ties, religion, clan affiliation and lineage, family history, participation in certain rituals, etc. (see Sagna & Bassène in press 2016 for a detailed study and Lüpke in press 2016a for a short discussion). Among them, linguistic codes have a central place, both as actual repertoires and ideological expressions of identity.

Social practices in the Lower Casamance have not systematically been investigated in relation to language use. In the following, I draw attention to those among them for which an impact on the internal structure of communities and on linguistic ideologies and practice have

¹⁰ Joking relationships, rather than relying on static ethnolinguistic criteria, operate very much on the same principle (Canut 2006, Canut & Smith 2006, de Jong 2005, Smith 2006). These relationships are widespread throughout West Africa and rely on differences that can be contextually evoked to create special relationships of inversion or solidarity.

¹¹ Religious affiliations are by no means fixed and unique. Two world religions, Christianity and Islam, co-exist with local religions and exhibit a great extent of syncretism and multiple and flexible affiliation (see Baum 1999, Foucher 2003, 2005, Mark 1978 and Mark, de Jong & Chupin 1998 for detailed studies of religion). In chapter 2 of Lüpke & Storch (2013) I describe the case of a woman who has dual identities as a Christian Baïnouk (as signified by two of her names, Hélène Coly) and a Muslim Mandinka (as signified by her second set of names, Teye Suko). Born as Hélène Coly, she received her second identity in the course of an infertility ritual and now displays both of them according to context.

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been observed. Research on the link between the two is in its infancy, but already reveals that social mechanisms that nurture multilingualism are also central for its maintenance.

Exogamy, child fostering and the integration of captives are mechanisms for exchange that both create heterogeneity within groups construed as homogeneous at the ideological level. Two of these processes can be observed today. In Lüpke (in press 2016a) I provide an in-depth account of how in- and out-marrying women bring linguistic diversity with them to the village of Agnack Grand. Nominally, this ward of Agnack is a Baïnouk village; yet, with the exception of one woman, none of the adult women living there has grown up in this village. In many instances, women married into Agnack Grand are issued from nominally Gugëcer (Kassanga) villages in near-by Guinea Bissau, with whom the Baïnouk are claimed to have strong historical ties (Hair 1967, Bühnen 1994). Women from Agnack have their married homes in neighbouring villages, regional towns and in Dakar. Bühnen (1994) claims that Baïnouk clans were strictly exogamous until the very recent past. He also describes how time-stable marriage exchange communities were created among the North Eastern and Eastern Baïnouk groups through the widespread practice of cross-cousin marriage binding together two lineages as givers and receivers of wives in which Baïnouk groups were eminent as “pourvoyeurs d’épouses” (Camara 1976: 33). According to Bühnen, giving wives was practiced by clans assuming the position of landlords to subordinate strangers, affirming the widely held claim of autochthony of these clans.

Children are as mobile as women through the widespread practice of child fostering (see chapter 2 of Lüpke and Storch 2013 for its significance for ethnolinguistic heterogeneity in Africa and Senegal and references to anthropological studies of this practice, and Lüpke in press 2016a for detailed examples from Agnack Grand, and Linares 1985 and 1988 for gendered roles and mobility in Jóola societies). The motivation for these exchanges lies in the strengthening of bonds between families. Both women and men have a long tradition of seasonal labour migration (see Linares 1985, 2003, Mark 1978). The constant circulation of women, children and to a lesser extent, men, means that linguistic practice has always been multilingual and heteroglossic. This is confirmed by the accounts of travellers and researchers that were not just in spurious contact with indigenous traders, as is the case of most Portuguese and French traders until the end of the 18th century, but that had greater exposure to the social life of rural communities and trading posts from the end of the 18th century onwards. These practices, through the constant integration of ‘strangers’ and through the multiple networks maintained by mobile individuals, create the tension between fission and

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fusion at work at all levels of social organisation in the area, since they bring together members of groups otherwise construed as different. As laid out above, the Frontier situation and exposure of small groups to attacks and slave raids historically created the necessity of creating links through social exchanges. These links resulted in a diffusion of cultural patterns that became very similar in the course of centuries of dense multiple relationships. The picture of a dynamic mosaic of practices made convergent through dense interaction at the local level is also confirmed by studies of agriculture, material culture, iconography and religion (Baum 1999, de Jong 1999, 2007, Linares 1992, 2005, Mark 1987, 1988, 1992, 2002, Mark, de Jong & Chupin 1998). All these aspects of culture show small-scale convergences that create a patchwork of identical or very similar practices and artefacts. Although they are now being claimed for particular ethnic groups (see §3 for the motivations of this process) they cannot be ascribed to any of them and are better seen as orthogonal to these recent constructs. Therefore, these convergences cannot be understood as instances of cultural creolisation, because the new ethnic identities, such as Jóola and Bainounk, are not based on cultural convergences – the shared traits and practices transcend these groupings. What is even more poignant in the context of Casamance and of many African Frontier societies is that these creolisation processes do not reach the realm of language.

In contrast to the widespread and far-reaching cultural similarities, linguistic differences are strikingly manifest and counteract them. In many areas of Casamance, multilingualism in closely related languages has been upheld over centuries, rather than reduced through the emergence of creolised shared languages or recourse to a *lingua franca*.¹² The maintenance of multilingual repertoires comes with high cognitive demands (Green 2011, Green & Abutalebi 2013), which makes it extremely likely that the motivation for upholding multilingualism in the face of cultural convergence is social. In fact, many of the languages of the region, for instance some of the Jóola varieties such as Eegimaa and Kujireray, are so closely related that it must constitute a great effort to keep them as potentially separate codes in an individual's repertoire rather than merging them into one. In addition, a Portuguese-based Creole has been present in the area for a long time and offered an alternative identity

¹² There is preliminary evidence that language mixing and creolisation occur. Hantgan (in prep.) describes Kujireray as a mixed language, with Jóola Eegimaa and Bainounk Gubëher as component languages. It is also possible that a process of cultural creolisation is happening in Brin, but it is too early to draw definite conclusions. It is remarkable, however, that speakers of Jóola Eegimaa and of Bainounk Gubëher are mostly bilingual in Kujireray (while the inverse holds less frequently), so this merger has a very local character. Oral histories of Djibonker (whose patrimonial language is Bainounk Gubëher) describe Brin as a village founded by them as a slave village for slaves from the North bank of the Casamance river (Alexander Cobbinah p.c), but not from the Eegimaa language area, which does not really offer an explanation for this particular mixing pattern.

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option that has not been taken up as a general model (see Mark 2002). Kopytoff's observation on the nature of Frontier interactions and the constantly added layers of identity they result in is of great relevance here. New constellations in which individuals and groups at the Frontier find themselves require the addition of new layers that often systematically contradict the older layers. Yet, they do not supplant them, and therefore make it "possible to assert what was culturally plausible – that one was reviving old lingering ties" (Kopytoff 1987: 73) when creating connections with groups otherwise seen as foes. These identity layers are associated with languages claimed and used, and their multiplicity enables the indexical use of languages to contextually reference otherwise incompatible identities. Once groups and individuals had started to use linguistic resources to maximise and multiply the potential alliances they could enter in this vein, multilingualism became a strategic asset, and a strong social motivation to maintain it was created, turning it into a habitus (Bourdieu 1977). Alliances with different groups are based on and thus necessitate being different and similar in the right contexts, as also described by Cobbinah (in prep.) as a dialectic strategy.

A small-scale multilingual area transcending and upholding boundaries

Areas with societal and individual multilingualism within societies that can be seen as cultural spaces – Frontier societies - persist worldwide where small-scale pre-industrial societies exist at the margins of larger, stratified societies and survive in the shadow of those settings and languages that are regulated by European standard language culture fuelled by nationalist ideologies. These small-scale societies are sometimes described as practising "egalitarian multilingualism" (François 2012), "balanced multilingualism" (Aikhenvald 2007) or "traditional multilingualism" (Di Carlo in press 2016). When attempting a characterisation of different settings of this kind, it appears that a useful preliminary generalisation might be to group together all those configurations where multilingual language use is not primarily motivated by power relations or prestige accorded to particular codes. This does not entail these societies are necessarily egalitarian or traditional; rather, it means that they have remained at the margin of states and larger polities and therefore of those processes that create more homogeneous and monolingual societies with standard language cultures or stratified polyglossic, i.e. hierarchical, multilingualism. It is likely that these multilingual settings constitute "the primal human condition" (Evans 2013). There are many such societies still thriving across the globe, in particular in Africa, parts of South America and Australia and

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Oceania (see Lüpke in press 2016b for a first attempt at systematically comparing some of these settings). The vast majority remain undescribed, and the existing case studies on them leave many questions open. Yet, it already emerges that many of these configurations share a number of characteristics, which are:

- confined geographic settings
- many shared cultural traits in the entire setting making it a meaningful entity
- complex exchange dynamics relying on dialectic relationships between similarity and alterity
- indexical language ideologies
- little or no use of a lingua franca, at least until the very recent past

Many of the practices and social motivations that nurtured these settings are undergoing rapid changes of a new scale due to massive social transformation in post-colonial societies. In the following section, I sketch those changes for which we have preliminary evidence for small-scale multilingual settings of Casamance. They are similar to the adaptations occurring in other small-scale multilingual societies as they are being drawn into larger exchange patterns governed by different interactions and power dynamics.

Recent and ongoing transformations

“[t]he invention of tradition is about the creation of a past into which the present is inserted. Thus, these constructed histories are also about the constructed present”
(Makoni & Pennycook 2007: 8)

Bringing ethnolinguistic identities to the market

In the present-day nation state of Senegal, ethnolinguistic identities – identities based on nationalistic and essentialist ideologies linking ethnic identities to particular languages – have come to play a new role. In the wake of colonisation and post-colonial independence, linguistic policies were created that have added a dimension of linguistic stratification and hierarchisation very dissimilar to the fluid heteroglossic practices in Casamance and beyond in pre-colonial times. The proponents of these ideologies do not only draw on languages as

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discrete objects and create associated ethnolinguistic identities; they also attempt to lift these ideologies to the level of linguistic practice through the enforcement of a standard. The ex-colonial language French is used in few domains (and even in those more in principle than in actual practice), but in those with the highest status according to Western notions of language: parliament, the education system and print media. At the same time, Senegalese French emerged as a partly conventionalised variety of French in its own right, and linguistic practice is fluid between the poles of metropolitan French (mastered by a small elite and, at least officially, taught in schools) and Senegalese French as acquired outside the normative school context and without sharing its main symbol of prestige: prescriptive literacy (Manessy 1994). Wolof, the patrimonial language of Dakar and surroundings, has seen an ascension and broadening of its speaker base in tandem with French. Based on historical textbooks, it is possible to trace the origins of Urban Wolof, a variety of Wolof heavily intertwined with French, to 18th century Saint Louis, where it was used as a broker language by *métis*. Through an imitation of their language use, this Wolof variety “did not arise out of widespread societal bilingualism in Wolof and French, but rather emerged as a prestigious urban code, modelled after the speech of a small group of bilingual elites, including the *métis* or mixed-race population of Saint-Louis, who dominated commercial and political life at the time” (Mc Laughlin 2008: 714, *pace* Swigart 1994 and Cruise O’Brien 1998 who see Urban Wolof as a side product of post-colonial creolisation). Later, Urban Wolof spread to Gorée, Carabane and other trade posts with Creole populations. While very few Senegalese speak metropolitan French, which is mainly confined to written use, oral language practices constitute a continuum between code-mixing and fused lect (Auer 1999) involving Wolof and French, the exact make-up of this fluid and versatile languaging (Garcia & Li Wei 2014) determined by personal linguistic biographies, context and interlocutor. Urban Wolof today is the *de facto* national language of Senegal. In the urban centre of Dakar, it is becoming the vernacular language of migrants from rural areas who abandoned their ethnic identities of origin according to Dreyfus & Juillard (2004), making it look indeed like an instance of creolisation (Hannerz 1987, Knörr 2010) – the creation of a new common identity deriving from different sources, but crucially with ethnic reference. In other areas of Senegal, Wolof is present as a vehicular language, as described by Dreyfus & Juillard for Ziguinchor, reminiscent of what Knörr (2010) calls a process of post-colonial pidginisation: the creation of a new identity and practice without ethnic reference. While the ongoing presence of the ex-colonial language French provokes feelings ranging from ambivalence to rhetorical rejection, the growing use of

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Wolof evokes fears of “Wolofisation” for those Senegalese who do not see it as their identity language. Both languages occupy powerful, if different, positions in the polyglossic linguistic landscape created through their special roles and weight in a centralised state now also encompassing the Frontier societies in the South.

The new linguistic order of Senegal constitutionally regulates which languages, in addition to the official language French, are to be seen as “national languages”. While until 1971, no other language achieved any official status, the 1971 amendment granted the status of “national language” to Jóola, Mandinka, Pular, Sereer, Soninké and Wolof. A standardised variety of each of these language clusters, which often have considerably internal diversity, has been provided with a codified orthography. A crucial change occurred in 2001, when this list of languages was expanded with the addition “and any national language that will be codified”. (Diallo 2010: 62). This new version of Article 1 of the constitution opened up the possibility of ‘other’ languages of Senegal to at least symbolically overcome the marginal status imposed on them through their existence beneath the threshold of official recognition. To do so, they had to be made to resemble the languages that already had been awarded national language status through a process of codification. This process consists of the development of a standardised orthography and spelling rules. I have described this in detail for the Bainounk languages (Lüpke 2011, Lüpke & Storch 2013, Lüpke forthcoming a. Codification and orthography development are not motivated by practical needs to read or write these languages, and the actual use of minority languages in writing remains rare, and in the new prescriptive orthographies virtually unattested. Rather, orthography development is to be understood as staking a claim on the new ethnolinguistic market place of the Senegalese nation state. As noted by Jaffe (2000: 505): “as a linguistic boundary-marking device, orthography both differentiates a code from other codes and displays an internal coherence and unity (sameness) of that code. In this respect, orthography is one of the key symbols of language unity and status itself”. Paraphrasing Jaffe, what is crucial in this context is for minority groups to “have” an orthography, not to use it. Despite the orthography never being used, this process of codification has far-reaching consequences. It goes far beyond the technical task of identifying a convenient way of writing a language, as it in fact involves creating a language, an abstraction grouping together *and* excluding codes through boundaries. To provide an example, the codification commission for “the Baïnounk language” has provided sample texts in three varieties: Gujaher, Guñaamolo and Gubëeher, and thus *de facto* decreed them to constitute Baïnounk. Other varieties that seem similarly eligible, from a

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linguistic and cultural perspective, such as Gugècer, Gufangor, Guñun, etc., have not been included, for reasons unknown. Yet, this omission is not relevant, as it is not the actual usability that is crucial for the success of codification, but rather the visibility of otherwise invisible codes and by extension of the groups that claim them. It is perhaps not accidental that this process of identity formation resembles the historical processes of forging symbolic alliances described earlier. Indeed, I would like to argue that it follows the logic of the local Frontier. Creating unity through codification is an instance of a contextualised symbolic unity. What makes this alliance particularly interesting is that it brings versatile Frontier processes into a domain based on essentialist, not indexical identities.

Strategic essentialism as a political tool

For the ethnic identities currently *en vogue* in Senegal and elsewhere, there is compelling evidence that they were forged from the late 18th century onwards and that links between ethnic and linguistic identity and ethnicity and language use are ideological constructions (see Lüpke & Storch 2013 for a detailed discussion and references). The still ongoing process of ethnogenesis is best understood as a metadiscursive regime (Bauman & Briggs 2003) that can be seen as an instance of strategic essentialism (Spivak 1990) also described for minority groups elsewhere (Stanton 2005, Blackledge & Creese 2010). Oral histories claiming homogeneous and monolingual groups do not remember the past; they create the past, as Makoni and Pennycook (2007) remind us, just as codification does not maintain languages but creates them. Both for the Jóola and Baïnouk, this process of ethnogenesis has been described in detail elsewhere. Here, I am interested in the interaction between essentialist and indexical processes and strategies, and at which levels these seemingly contradictory processes operate.

It is not accidental that diaspora organisations are instrumental in promoting essentialist ideas about belonging, and in creating those discourses that justify them. In the Casamance context (see Bühnen 1994, Lüpke 2011, chapter 2 of Lüpke & Storch 2013, Smith 2006), statutes decree the ancestors as monolingual, homogeneous groups, oral histories are streamlined to create particular lineages, carnivalesque cultural manifestations claim elements of material culture for particular ethnic groups. Strikingly, these activities enforce the subaltern status of ‘minority’ cultures rather than gaining them full membership in the kaleidoscope of ethnolinguistic units. A cultural carnival organised in July 2013 in Dakar by

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Senegalese historians and linguists aimed at promoting Baïnounk and Bassari culture came under the name “Le Sénégal découvre ses autres cultures. Des villages culturels Bédik, Bassari et Baynounk à Dakar ” – ‘Senegal is discovering its other cultures’, inscribing the cultural hegemony of the unmarked Wolof-centric culture. It is to this hegemonic standard culture (itself a fiction) that these and similar gestures are addressed, making the carnival resound of Bakhtin (1993) in more than in name. Similarly, a manifestation exhibiting the masques and dances of a number of Casamance groups in Ziguinchor in 2010 (see Figure 1 below) was not designed for members of these groups as the audience. Dancers were ordered to perform, while carrying placards with ethnic labels, for representatives of the regional and national political elite.

But it is not just diasporic groups, faced daily with the need to affirm an identity that is feared to becoming lost in transition, that enact essentialist gestures. In 2015, a “Baïnounk” king was crowned in Ganjandy, in Guinea Bissau (Abbie Hantgan, p.c.). Delegations from various Baïnounk villages attended this event. It was clearly inspired by myths of Baïnounk kingdoms, which have been converging towards the myth of one kingdom, epitomised by the last king Sira Bana who was killed by his own people (Bühnen 1994) and whose final curse of his murderous subjects has become symbolic for the decline of the Baïnounk people in the public imagination.¹³ We do not know exactly who organised this event, which is unlikely to have any political consequences but constitutes a symbolic affirmation of Baïnounk unity that clearly draws its legitimation from past, not present, symbols of power. What emerges more clearly, however, is that this unity is created out of very present-day concerns and for a national public, as Figure 2 illustrates. It shows the note “Délégation Baïnounk de Djibonker” – ‘Baïnounk delegation from Djibonker’ in the front window of the car in which delegates from Djibonker travelled to the coronation. The wording plays out the formats of the political elite and thus identifies it as the addressee of the message that the Baïnounk are a contemporary unified political group deriving its legitimation from a strong historical tradition.

¹³ Incidentally, this myth is a prototypical instance of the Frontier ruler-subject interdependence, where kings could be deposed or killed if subjects were disappointed that is enshrined in many Frontier myths (Kopytoff 1987). The myth points to the fact that Frontier societies were not homogeneous, even when construed as such in patrimonial fashion, but consisted of several factions (minimally “first-comers and “late-comers”) and that power struggles and changes in leadership and political status were frequent.

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Figure 1: cultural manifestation in Ziguinchor (left) and Figure 2: car of the Bainounk delegation (right)¹⁴



Abbie Hantgan reports that Bainounk languages were not spoken at the coronation ceremony, since in fact, their use would have hindered understanding, as they not mutually intelligible and individuals are hardly ever bilingual in two or more Bainounk languages. Clearly, the lack of linguistic unification was no obstacle for the political claim, and likewise, languages were unsuitable to make it. The Bainounk languages index affiliation with a patrimonial location, and in many cases this affiliation is not with a polity¹⁵ but with a Frontier village. Thus, claiming a particular language means that one belongs to the lineage of the founding clan of a location where one lives (if that clan are seen as the first-comers) or from where one originated (if one's clan are seen as new-comers). The latter case is relevant not just at the level of Casamance, but also at a much larger geographical scale.

A new frontier

Kopytoff (1987) has described urban migration as creating new frontiers. There is ample evidence that African cities are not just melting pots where old identities are eradicated and new urban ones evolve, but where new-comers tap into networks of local and regional associates who have preceded them in migration (Potts 2009, Vigouroux & Mufwene 2008). The former metropole remains the patrimonial home, the place of the ancestors to which one

¹⁴ Figure 1 © Amadou Kane Beye for the DoBeS project “Pots, plants and pebble” and Figure 2 © Kris Dreessen for the Leverhulme Crossroads Project.

¹⁵ There is evidence from historical sources (i.e. Baum for the Esulalu, Bühnen for some Bainounk groups) that some larger Frontier polities with reduced heterogeneity were present in pre-colonial Casamance, and still today, some polities, such as the Jóola Eegimaa “kingdom” Mov Avvi remain in name, although Mov Avvi has not had a king for forty years. There is preliminary evidence that multilingualism and Frontier strategies are somewhat reduced in the Mov Avvi, which would be in line with Kopytoff's observation that these larger polities, which were usually called kingdoms, transcend Frontier dynamics to some extent and result in political formations closer to the “tribal” model than Frontier societies.

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returns for important celebrations and rituals, the location feeding many aspects of identity, for as long as one remains a new-comer or retains strong links with the territory of origin.

At the same time, of course, new repertoires are acquired and existing practices and identities are adapted in the city. The interaction between these two frontiers, a local and a translocal, is important for Casamançais, who have a long history of labour migration, and most of them navigate these two poles throughout their lives. It is frequent to see families divided between a village in Casamance and Dakar, with great mobility between these two locations. Most family members will return to their patrimonial home during the summer holidays, and this is now the time during which important ceremonies such as the *bukut* male initiation is held, in order to accommodate attendees having to travel far (de Jong 2002, Cobbinah in prep.). Children are often raised by family members, not by their biological parents, and interesting patterns appear: while single women migrating to cities as domestic workers often send their children to Casamance to be brought up by relatives there (Vandermeersch 2002), children are also sent to Dakar, mainly in the interest of their education or better medical care.

As said before, Kopytoff describes Frontier identities as layered because new ones are added instead of being suppressed, resulting in identity claims often contradictory at face value, and this is exactly what is observable in the Senegalese context as well. It is not just visible in seemingly contradictory identities such as ‘Jóola-Bañounk’ that subsume late-comer and first-comer identities and groups divided by manifold antagonisms under one label if warranted by a context; it is also observable at the level of language regimes. Weidl (in prep.) describes how LS, a woman who has lived in Dakar for a number of years and has now returned to her patrimonial village makes contradictory statements about Wolof – claiming on the one hand that she would only mix Wolof and French, not Wolof and a local language, but in the next utterance making a statement to the contrary, asserting that people would mix all their languages all the time. Once one dissects these statements as pertaining to two different language regimes significant for the two different Frontiers she navigates, the first operative in Dakar, the second in Djibonker, the contradiction can be analysed as referring to two different linguistic contexts. LS would be in a different language mode (Green and Abutalebi 2013) in Dakar, where the local languages are not part of many of her interlocutors’ repertoires, than in Djibonker, where they are. People move physically between the local and the translocal Frontier; and they move ideologically between the two areas of language use

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and language attitudes associated with them, bringing them in proximity through their mobility.

Conclusion: A constant interaction of patterns

“The African societies we know were all born not “in the beginning” but as part of a continuous and variegated process of interaction and social formation – a process that included these forms as part of the condition in which they were created and re-created. It was an ecology that made for the fact that states and stateless societies have existed side by side for over nearly two millennia.” (Kopytoff 1987: 78)

In this paper, I have argued that a dualism between sameness and difference is running deep through all areas of social and linguistic organisation in Casamance. This dualism can be understood as a Frontier process, and the Frontier as a location and locus of numerous boundaries that create both the motivations and the habitus to keep complex patterns of multilingualism alive. Driven by a need to form flexible alliances and dissolve them where needed, inhabitants of the Frontier have developed this deeply entrenched dialectic pattern of first-comers and late-comers (Kopytoff 1987) or landlord and stranger (Brooks 1993). It is worthwhile to dedicate more detailed study to this particular Frontier, and to the possible Frontier societies constituted by small-scale multilingual societies world-wide. In these societies, speakers have exhibited an astonishing multitude of contextualised repertoires in rural areas beyond the reach of centralised states that for many sociolinguists are associated with radically new and opposed settings of urbanization and globalization, resulting in a qualitatively new “superdiversity” (Vertovec 2007, 2011, Blommaert & Rampton 2011). The following quote poignantly illustrates how strong this ideological association of diversity with globalisation is:

“Under the condition of globalization, speakers participate in varying spaces of communication which may be arranged sequentially, in parallel, juxtapositionally, or in overlapping form. At different periods in their lives, at different moments of their day, or even simultaneously (with the help of digital means of communication, for example) speakers participate in several spaces that are socially and linguistically constituted in different ways. Each of these spaces has its own language regime – its

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own set of rules, orders of discourse, and language ideologies – in which linguistic resources are assessed differently.” (Busch, 2015: 4)

Yet in Casamance, as in other Frontier locations in Africa (see Di Carlo in press 2016, Good 2013, Di Carlo & Good 2014 for an exemplary study of the Lower Fungom area of Cameroon) and beyond, the varying, juxtaposed and overlapping spaces of communication predate globalization by far (even though they were arguably exacerbated by the first wave of globalization, the transatlantic slave trade, in the case of Casamance). Historically old models of interaction create the prerequisites to navigate new Frontiers. A deeper understanding of language use in these Frontier societies is therefore of great promise for an understanding of the driving forces of continuing linguistic complexity and multilingualism, in particular against a backdrop of linguistic homogenization across the globe.

Languages, in this microcosm of dense interactions, cannot be understood as stable, conventionalised parts of repertoires. Since speakers navigate local and translocal Frontiers, the roles attached to languages in these different contexts shape their practices into flexible, adaptive repertoires. The dichotomies between creolisation and pidginisation, between vernacularisation and vehicularisation, between language maintenance and language shift are fed by the underlying dualism that is the language habitus at work here. This means that dynamic languaging patterns activate or transcend, negate or change these opposite poles and the boundaries they create according to the powerful Frontier logic. Individuals will engage in all of these processes, depending on their trajectories. None of them constitutes an irreversible end point, and several roles for languages can be active within one and the same individual at the same point in time, creatively using language to index different parts of a complex identity.

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